

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01
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O R 021511Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2330
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION SINAI

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E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IS
SUBJ: DEMONSTRATION AGAINST GOVERNMENT'S FOREIGN POLICY

1. A LARGE BUT ORDERLY DEMONSTRATION AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND PEACE NEGOTIATIONS TOOK PLACE IN TEL AVIV THE EVENING OF APRIL 1. POLICE ESTIMATED THE CROWD AT MORE THAN 20,000; THE ORGANIZERS AND OTHER OBSERVERS ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE TO 30,000 TO 35,000. THE CROWD WAS COMPOSED PRIMARILY, BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY, OF YOUNG PEOPLE, MANY OF WHOM ARRIVED AT THE SITE BY BUS (I.E., NOT TEL AVIVIAN). IT WAS A SHORT MEETING -- FROM 1845 TO 2000 -- AND FEATURED NOTHING MORE THAN A FEW SPEAKERS.

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2. THE MEETING WAS MORE REMARKABLE FOR WHAT IT WAS NOT THAN FOR WHAT IT WAS. IT WAS NOT AN ANGRY DEMONSTRATION, IT WAS NOT POLITICAL IN THE PARTISAN SENSE, IT WAS NOT PROFESSIONALLY ORGANIZED, THERE WERE NO PROMINENT NAMES PRESENT, THERE WERE NO MKS AMONG THE SPEAKERS (ALTHOUGH SOME WERE IN THE CROWD), AND IT WAS NOT ANTI-BEGIN IN ATMOSPHERE ALTHOUGH CRITICAL OF HIS POLICIES. THERE WERE

A NUMBER OF PLACARDS WHICH READ "PEACE NOW," "BETTER
PEACE THAN TERRITORIES," ETC.

3. THE ORGANIZERS OF THE RALLY, ACCORDING TO NEWSPAPER
ADS AND THE SPEECHES AT THE MEETING, WERE THE RESERVE
OFFICERS WHO SIGNED THE LETTER LAST MONTH TO BEGIN.
THERE IS NO PUBLIC EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT FROM ANY POLITICAL
PARTY (SEE TEL AVIV 3974), ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOTED SEVERAL
NEWSPAPER ADS EXPRESSING SUPPORT FROM PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS.

4. COMMENT: IT WOULD BE INCORRECT TO SPEAK OF A GROUND-
SWELL OF PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST BEGIN'S POLICIES. NEVER-
THELESS, THE FACT THAT MORE THAN 20,000 ISRAELIS ATTENDED
A RALLY TO EXPRESS THEIR CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLY LOSING
A CHANCE FOR PEACE IS NOT WITHOUT SIGNIFICANCE. THE
ATTENDANCE WAS A SURPRISE TO THE ORGANIZERS, WHO HAD SAID
ANYTHING OVER 10,000 WOULD BE A SUCCESS. IT IS
IRONIC THAT THE DEMONSTRATION TOOK PLACE AS ISRAEL'S
FIRST EVER JOURNALISTS STRIKE BEGAN; ISRAEL TODAY HAS NO
NEWSPAPERS, TELEVISION NOR RADIO (OTHER THAN THE ARMED
FORCES RADIO) AND THE IMPACT OF LAST NIGHT'S MEETING
IS MUCH LESS THAN IT WOULD HAVE BEEN WITH FULL MEDIA
COVERAGE AND COMMENTARY.
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